



Mapping the TOEIC® and TOEIC Bridge™ Tests on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Executive Summary

Background

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR) provides a common basis for describing the skills needed to reach different levels of language proficiency, and is used by language instructors, educators, curriculum designers and agencies working in the field of language development. The CEFR describes language proficiency in listening, reading, speaking and writing on a six-level scale:

- A1 – A2 (Basic User)
- B1 – B2 (Independent User)
- C1 – C2 (Proficient User)

The CEFR provides a descriptive context that may be used to interpret the meaning and practical significance of scores on language tests. If a test score can be one of the levels of the CEFR, what that score means and what candidates with at least that score are likely to be able to do becomes clear.

ETS's Goal

The purpose of this mapping study was to identify the minimum scores on the TOEIC® (*Test of English for International Communication*™) test corresponding to each level. Minimum scores were identified separately for listening, reading, speaking and writing. Minimum scores were also to be identified for the TOEIC Bridge™ test corresponding to CEFR levels A1, A2 and B1.

- The TOEIC® Listening and Reading test measures the receptive skills of people working in an international environment.
- The TOEIC® Speaking and Writing tests measure the productive skills of people working in an international environment.
- The TOEIC Bridge test measures the emerging receptive skills (listening and reading comprehension) of early learners in an international environment.

Standard-setting Study

Standard setting is the process by which a panel of informed experts makes score requirement recommendations that correspond with the level of knowledge, skill, proficiency, mastery or readiness candidates need in order to be placed in a certain category. The end result of standard setting is a recommended minimum score requirement, or cut score. The minimum scores for each CEFR level in this particular study are presented as lower limits of the level for each modality.

For this study, the panel consisted of 22 experts (English-language instructors, administrators or directors of language programs and language testing experts) from 10 different European countries.



Results

The expert panel was asked to recommend minimum test scores (cut scores) for each of the six CEFR levels (A1 through C2). Because it was possible that not all panelists would believe that a test section addressed each CEFR level, ETS established a criterion whereby at least two-thirds (67%) of the 22 panelists had to indicate that it was appropriate to recommend a cut score for a level. The table below presents the recommended minimum score for each test section at each CEFR proficiency level for the tests reviewed.

At least two-thirds of the panel concluded that the TOEIC Listening, Speaking and Writing sections ranged from the A1 level to the C1 level, and that the Reading section ranged from the A1 level to the B2 level. The Reading section did not meet the two-thirds criterion at the C1 level; 45% of the panelists (10 of 22) recommended a cut score at this level. Although the two-thirds criterion was not satisfied, ETS understands that decision makers may still need to have a reference for what a potential TOEIC Reading cut score may be at this level. It is with this awareness that the C1 value of 455 is reported.

They also established that the TOEIC *Bridge* test ranged from the A1 level to the B1 level. These results are consistent with the claims of the tests.

Interpreting Results

Institutions, employers, English programs and learners can interpret the recommended minimum scores on the TOEIC and TOEIC *Bridge* tests by referring to the global descriptors and other tables in the CEFR at www.ets.org/scoredesc. The results represent the recommendations of informed experts using recognized standard-setting approaches. However, they should be considered guidelines as ETS does not recommend the use of rigid cut scores.

Technical Report

This standard-setting study was conducted by ETS researchers Richard J. Tannenbaum, Ph.D., and E. Caroline Wylie, Ph.D., in October 2006.

Test/Test Section	Total Score Scale Range	Minimum Score				
		A1	A2	B1	B2	C1
TOEIC Listening and Reading Total¹						
TOEIC Listening	5–495	60	110	275	400	490
TOEIC Reading	5–495	60	115	275	385	455 ⁴
TOEIC Speaking and Writing²						
TOEIC Speaking	0–200	50	90	120	160	200
TOEIC Writing	0–200	30	70	120	150	200
TOEIC Bridge³						
TOEIC <i>Bridge</i> Listening	10–90	46	64	84		
TOEIC <i>Bridge</i> Reading	10–90	46	70	86		

¹ TOEIC Listening and Reading scores are reported in 5-point increments.

² TOEIC Speaking and Writing scores are reported in 10-point increments. No total score is reported.

³ TOEIC *Bridge* scores are reported in 2-point increments. No total score is reported.

⁴ TOEIC Reading C1 minimum score is based on 45% of the panelists.

For information about this study:

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